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MISS LAYTON OF CHARLES DARWIN: A RECORD OF HIS WORK IN A HOUSE OF HIGHER EDUCATION. Edited by Francis Darwin and A. C. Seward. London: John Murray. 3vo, 2 vols. With portraits. 22s. net.

Of the writings of such a genius as Charles Darwin it is impossible we should have too much. No man ever weighed his words, even in the briefest communications, with more conscientious scrutiny or with a more abiding sense of responsibility. Even his casual notes to almost unknown correspondents contain illuminating suggestions and queries the answers to which would constitute important additions to human knowledge. The "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin" was published fifteen years ago, and the publication of some of the correspondence which now appears has been made possible by the deaths of honored leaders in science which have taken place in the interval. The greater part of the material, however, consists of a mass of letters which were omitted from the previous work simply for want of space. Even these two volumes do not exhaust the stock, for we are told that "at some future time others may find interesting data in what remains unprinted," and that a whole series of letters relating to the researches on the *Cirripedes* have been now omitted for want of space. The letters have been arranged in accordance with a rough subject classification, under headings such as "Evolution," "Geographical Distribution," "Man," "Zoology," "Botany." It has, however, been wisely decided not to dismember individual letters, and hence the planing of some has not been easy. It would be difficult to decide, for example, in some cases whether a letter should be classed under "Evolution" or "Botany." This part of the work has been done with great judgment. The letters are annotated in the most complete and painstaking manner, a few necessary facts are given about every correspondent, and all allusions in the letters, whether to persons, places, or published statements, are fully explained.

That the bulk of the letters are highly technical goes without saying, and those in particular addressed to the men whom we may term Darwin's regular correspondents are full of close argument regarding scientific details. Nothing was more characteristic of Darwin than his caution, which seems to have been to some extent increased in him by the shortcomings of others, for in a letter to Robert Chambers we read: "I see that you fulminate against the acceptance of scientific men. You would not fulminate quite so much if you had had so many wild-goose chase after facts stated by men not trained to scientific accuracy. I often vow to myself that I will strictly disregard every statement made by anyone who has not shown the world he can observe accurately." Some of the queries he puts to his friends seem almost trivial in their minuteness, and yet, viewed in the light of his published works, every one had its clear and definite purpose. For example: "When a horse is turned out into a field he tests with high elastic steps and carries his tail aloft. Even

when a cow frisks about she throws up her tail. When the elephants are turned out and are excited so as to move quickly, do they carry their tails aloft? How is this with the rhinoceros?" Very characteristic is the natural, unostentatious courtesy of his correspondence with men who had criticized his work. The anonymous reviewer is treated by him with the deference of a pupil towards a master. Regarding a notice of his "Descent of Man" which appeared in the "Fort Hall Gazette" and is now known to have been written by Mr. John Morley he writes: "You say that my phraseology on beauty is 'highly scientifically and philosophically most misleading.' This is not at all imputable, as it is almost a lifetime since I attached to the philosophy of aesthetics." He goes on to ask for references to literature and to explain more carefully his own position. There is perhaps no greater test of the honesty of a scientific man than his willingness to abandon his views on theories so soon as they are seen to be opposed by well-established facts. How creditably Darwin comes out of this test can be seen from the correspondence relating to the so-called "parallel roads of Glen Roy" in the Highlands. These are a series of narrow terraces which sweep round the shoulders of the hills with "underlying horizontality." In 1850 Darwin spent eight days examining them, and in the following year published a paper in which he regarded them as old sea beaches which had been raised to their present position by a gradual elevation of the Lochaber district. This view he several times maintained in opposition to the glacial theory of Buckland and Agassiz, and notwithstanding this he writes of James Hutton's paper, which appeared in 1865: "You are perfectly right. As soon as I read Mr. Jantzen's article on the parallel roads I gave up the ghost with more sighs and groans than on almost any other occasion in my life." It will perhaps be seen from these extracts that the volumes now have much that is not of interest to specialists.